

**LISTING OF THE CLAIMS**

1. (Withdrawn) A method for obtaining media data in a client device, the method comprising:
  - requesting media data from a meta data server;
  - receiving meta data from the meta data server, the meta data being associated with the requested media data, and identifying one or more media data servers having the media data, and the one or more media data servers being operated independent of the meta data server, including without substantive continuous observation by, and communication with the meta data server;
  - using the received meta data to locate at least one of the one or more media data servers; and
  - accessing the requested media data from the at least one of the located media data server.
2. (Withdrawn) A distributed media network system comprising:
  - at least one meta data server, wherein in response to receiving a request for media data the meta data server provides meta data associated with the requested media data;
  - one or more media data servers separate and independently operated from the meta data server, including without substantive continuous observation by, and communication with the media data server, wherein said meta data provided by the meta data server includes identification of at least one of the one or more media data servers having the media data; and
  - at least one client connected to the meta data server for transmitting a request for media data to the meta data server, the client using the meta data received from the meta data server to locate at least one

of the one or more media data servers and access the requested media data.

3-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Withdrawn) The system as in claim 2, wherein a second client of said at least one client functions as a first media data server of said one or more media data servers, and wherein the one or more meta data servers inform said at least one client that said second client has said requested media data.

6-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently amended) A method for servicing media data requests in a meta data server, the method comprising:

receiving a media data request from a client, the request received by a meta data server;

retrieving meta data associated with the media data request from a meta data database, the meta data identifying a media data server having the requested media data, the media data server being separate and independently operated from the meta data server, including without ~~substantive~~ continuous observation by, and communication with the meta data server; and

transmitting the meta data to the client for use by the client to locate the media data server to retrieve the media data.

10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the meta data contains an address of said media data server, and the method further comprises:

designating said media data server as a primary media data server, based upon at least criteria gathered from a communications network between the client and the media data server.

11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the media data server designated as a primary media data server is a media data server having a lowest number of clients accessing media data, among a community of media data servers having the media data.

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the media data server designated as a primary media data server is a media data server having a highest reliability rating, among a community of media data servers having the media data.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the media data server designated as a primary media data server is a media data server having a highest data throughput, among a community of media data servers having the media data.

14. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the primary media data server is designated by the meta data server.

15. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the primary media data server is designated by the client.

16-17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the requested media data are encrypted, and the method further comprises:

requesting a decryption key for the requested media data from a meta data database, in response to another request from the client, subsequent to the providing of the meta data, and retrieving of the media data by the client; and  
transmitting the decryption key to the client.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 9, wherein said meta data comprises at least one data item, said at least one data item being selected from the list consisting of:

- a network address of a primary media data server that has access to the media data;
- a directory structure of the primary media data server;
- a name of a file having the media data;
- a network address of an alternate media data server that has access to the media data;
- a directory structure of the alternate media data server;
- a name of an owner of the media data;
- a name of a composer of the media data;
- a name of a copyright holder of the media data;
- a network address of a graphic image server that has access to a graphical image associated with the media data;
- a directory structure of the graphical image server;
- a name of a graphical image file associated with the media data;
- a title of an artistic work contained in the media data;
- a title of a body of work in which the media data is associated;
- a name of at least one performer of the media data;
- a name of at least one composer of artistic work contained in the media data;
- a name of at least one creators of the media data;
- a network address of an information server that has access to additional information about artistic work contained in the media data;
- a directory structure of the information server;
- a name of a file that contains additional information about artistic work contained in the media data;
- a network address of a sales server which offers a sale of the media data file;
- a directory structure of the sales server;

a name of a file that contains information on a sale of the media data;  
a network address of an associated sales server which offers a sale of  
associated products of the media data;  
a directory structure of the associated sales server; and  
a name of a file that contains information on sales of associated products  
of the media data.

21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, further comprising:  
receiving a log-in request from the client; and performing a client access  
permission verification.
22. (Cancelled)
23. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the meta data  
transmitted to the client are for a portion of the requested media data that is unusable  
without an additional portion of the requested media data, and the method further  
comprises:  
receiving request from the client for additional meta data for the additional  
portion of the requested media data; and  
transmitting the additional meta data to the client.
24. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the media data are encrypted, and  
the method further comprises:  
requesting subsequently from the meta data server, after receipt of the  
media data, a decryption key of the media data; and  
receiving the decryption key for the media data from the meta data server.
25. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the meta data received from the  
meta data server is for a portion of the requested media data that is unusable without  
an additional portion of the requested media data, and the method further comprises:  
requesting subsequently from the meta data server, additional meta data  
for the additional portion of the requested media data;

receiving the additional meta data for the additional portion of the requested media data from the meta data server; and accessing the additional portion of the requested media data using the additional meta data.

26. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 2, wherein the media data are encrypted, and the at least one meta data server is further adapted to transmit a decryption key to the client for using the media data.

27. (Withdrawn) The system of claim 2, wherein the meta data server is adapted to first transmit to the client, meta data for a portion of the requested media data, the portion of the requested media data being unusable without an additional portion of the requested media data, and then subsequently transmit to the client, additional meta data for the additional portion of the requested media data, the client using the additional meta data to access the additional portion of the media data from a media data server.

28. (Withdrawn) A method for obtaining media content in a client device, the method comprising:

requesting media content from a media service system,  
receiving meta data from the media service system, the meta data associated with the requested media content, and identifying one or more electronic devices having the requested media content, the one or more electronic devices being independently operated, including without substantive continuous observing by, and communicating with the media service system;  
using the received meta data to locate at least one of the one or more electronic devices on a network; and  
accessing the requested media content from at least one of the located one or more electronic devices.

29. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, wherein the media content is encrypted, and the method further comprises:

requesting subsequently from the media service system, after receipt of the media content, a decryption key for the media content; and receiving the decryption key for the media content from media service system.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, wherein the media content received from the electronic device is for a portion of the requested media content that is unusable without an additional portion of the requested media content, and the method further comprises:

requesting subsequently from the media service system, additional meta data for the additional portion of the requested media content; receiving the additional meta data for the additional portion of the requested media content from the media service system; and accessing the additional portion of the requested media content using the additional meta data.

31. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, wherein the electronic device is a computer system.

32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, wherein the requested media content is accessed from the electronic device over the Internet.

*Previous incorrectly numbered claim 32 renumbered to claim 57 has been moved to the proper ordinal position following claim 56.*

33. (Currently amended) A method for servicing requests for media content by a media service provider, the method comprising:

receiving a request for media content from a client, the request received by a media service system managed by the media service provider;

retrieving meta data associated with the requested media content from a meta data database, the meta data identifying one or more electronic devices having the requested media content, the one or more electronic devices being separate and independently operated from the media service system, by an entity different from the media service provider, including without substantive continuous observing by, and communicating with the media service system; and

transmitting the meta data to the client.

34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the requested media content is encrypted, and the method further comprises:

requesting a decryption key for the requested media content from a meta data database, in response to a subsequent request from the client; and

transmitting the decryption key to the client.

35. (Previously presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the meta data transmitted to the client are for a portion of the requested media content that is unusable without an additional portion of the requested media content, and the method further comprises:

receiving subsequent request from the client for additional meta data for the additional portion of the requested media content; and

transmitting the additional meta data to the client.

36. (Previously presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the electronic device is a computer system.

37. (Previously presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the requested media content is accessible from the electronic device over the Internet.

38. (Previously presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the requested media content is an audio file.

39. (Withdrawn) A computer program product for obtaining media content in a client device, the computer program product comprising a computer-readable medium containing computer program code for performing the operations of:

requesting media content from a media service system;  
receiving meta data from the media service system, the meta data associated with the requested media content, and identifying one or more electronic devices having the media content, the one or more electronic devices being independently operated from the media service system, including without substantive continuous observing by, and communicating with the media service system;  
using the received meta data to locate at least one of the one or more electronic devices on a network; and  
accessing the requested media content from the located at least one of the one or more electronic devices.

40. (Withdrawn) The computer program product of claim 39, wherein the media content is encrypted, and the computer-readable medium further contains computer program code for performing the operations of:

requesting the media service system, a decryption key for the media content; and  
receiving the decryption key for the media content from the media service system.

41. (Withdrawn) The computer program product of claim 39, wherein the media content received from the electronic device is for a portion of the requested media content that is unusable without an additional portion of the requested media content, and the computer-readable medium further contains computer program code for performing the operations of:

requesting from the media service system, additional meta data for the additional portion of the requested media content; receiving the additional meta data for the additional portion of the requested media content from the media service system; and accessing the additional portion of the requested media content using the additional meta data..

42. (Withdrawn) The computer program product of claim 39, wherein the electronic device is a computer system.

43. (Withdrawn) The computer program product of claim 39, wherein the requested media content is accessed from the electronic device over the Internet.

44. (Withdrawn) The computer program product of claim 39, wherein the requested media content is an audio file.

45. (Currently amended) A computer program product for servicing requests for media content by a media service provider, and the computer program product comprises a computer-readable medium containing computer program code for performing the operations of:

receiving a request for media content from a client, by a media service system;  
retrieving meta data associated with the requested media content from a meta data database, the meta data including identification of an electronic device having the requested media content, the electronic device being separate and independently operated from the media service system, including without substantive continuous observing by, and communicating with the media service system;  
and  
transmitting the meta data to the client.

46. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 45, wherein the requested media content is encrypted, and the computer-readable medium further contains computer program code for performing the operations of:

receiving a subsequent request from the client, for a decryption key for the requested media content; and  
transmitting the decryption key to the client.

47. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 45, wherein the meta data transmitted to the client are for a portion of the requested media content that is unusable without an additional portion of the requested media content, and the computer-readable medium further contains computer program code for performing the operations of:

receiving a subsequent request from the client for additional meta data for the additional portion of the requested media content; and  
transmitting the additional meta data to the client.

48. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 45, wherein the electronic device is a computer system.

49. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 45, wherein the requested media content is accessible from the electronic device over the Internet.

50. (Previously presented) The computer program product of claim 45, wherein the requested media content is an audio file.

51. (Withdrawn) A distributed media system comprising:

a media service system managed by a media service provider, wherein in response to receiving a request for media content the media service system provides meta data associated with the requested media content;

a plurality of electronic devices separate and independently operated from the media service system by an entity different from the media

service provider, including without substantive continuous observing by, and communicating with the media service system, wherein the meta data includes identifying of the electronic devices having the requested media content; and a client device for transmitting a request for media content to the media service system, the client device using the meta data received from the media service system to locate at least one of the electronic devices and access the requested media content therefrom.

52. (Withdrawn) The distributed media system of claim 51, wherein the media content is encrypted, and the media service system transmits a decryption key to the client device for using the media content, in response to a subsequent request for the decryption key from the client.

53. (Withdrawn) The distributed media system of claim 51, wherein the media service system transmits to the client device meta data for a portion of the requested media content, the portion of the requested media content being unusable without an additional portion of the requested media content, and the media service system further transmits to the client device additional meta data for the additional portion of the requested media content, in response to a subsequent request for the additional meta data from the client device, the client device using the additional meta data to access the additional portion of the media content from one or the electronic devices.

54. (Withdrawn) The distributed media system of claim 51, wherein the electronic devices are computer systems.

55. (Withdrawn) The distributed media system of claim 51, wherein the requested media content is accessed from an electronic device over the Internet.

56. (Withdrawn) The distributed media system of claim 51, wherein the requested media content is an audio file.

57. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, wherein the requested media content is an audio file.